

CHAPTER 1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE SECURITY ACTION

In response to the September 12, 1994, plane crash on the south grounds of the White House, then-Secretary of the Treasury Lloyd Bentsen established the White House Security Review to examine White House security issues related to the incident. Shortly afterward, the scope of the security issues being studied by the White House Security Review was expanded, in response to several subsequent security incidents, to include a thorough analysis of air and ground security at the White House Complex.

The Security Review produced a number of recommendations, among them was the recommendation to restrict vehicular traffic on certain portions of streets contiguous to the perimeter of the White House Complex. The *Public Report of the White House Security Review*, page 42, states that after extensive analysis of classified information, it was not able to identify any alternative to prohibiting vehicular traffic on those streets that would ensure the protection of the President and others in the White House Complex from explosive devices carried by vehicles near the perimeter. The White House Security Review's Advisory Committee unanimously endorsed the recommendation.

The security action, described in detail in Section 1.3 of this document, was taken by the Director of the United States Secret Service on May 20, 1995, following an Order, issued May 19, 1995, by the Secretary of the Treasury. The purpose of the security action is to provide necessary and appropriate protection for the President of the United States, the first family, and those working in or visiting the White House Complex (the White House Security Review defines the White House Complex as being composed of four principal structures: the Executive Mansion, the Old Executive Office Building, the West Wing, and the East Wing). Pedestrian and bicycle traffic was not restricted.

Due to the emergency nature of the vehicular traffic restrictions and for security reasons, the Department was unable to initiate an environmental assessment prior to completing the vehicular traffic restriction. Any delay in implementing this security action would have resulted in an unacceptably high risk of danger to the President, the first family, and the White House Complex. Nonetheless, the Department attempted to notify the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) on the evening of May 19, 1995, prior to the security action, and engaged in detailed discussions with CEQ during the days following the security action. During those discussions, CEQ expressed its concurrence with the Department's judgement that the situation was an emergency as described in 40 CFR 1506.11, and that the Department lawfully delayed the undertaking of the environmental assessment until after implementation of the security action. No alternatives to the security action are analyzed.

1.2 HISTORY OF SECURITY CONCERNS AT THE WHITE HOUSE COMPLEX

From the laying of the White House foundation until World War II, the grounds were open to free public access. However, from its construction in 1800 through World War II, the security measures at the White House were steadily increased. World War II brought changes so dramatic that security measures would never again be as relaxed.

The White House is among the few chief-executive residences to operate an open museum and to allow its

state rooms to be open most days to visitors (the White House is open to the public from Tuesday through Saturday). Those responsible for providing security at the Complex have always had to strike a balance between functional needs and the preservation of the White House's image as an enduring symbol of democracy.

Security concerns at the White House Complex were heightened when a bomb was set off in the Capitol Building in 1971. In 1974, an Army private stole a helicopter and landed it on the White House South Lawn, further arousing security concerns. Decades of discussions concerning permanent closure of East Executive Avenue to vehicular traffic were revived during the Administration of President Carter in the late 1970s. West Executive Avenue has been closed to public vehicular traffic since World War II.

In the 1980s, in the wake of another bomb explosion at the Capitol and bomb threats to the White House, security concerns were further heightened and a number of measures were taken to increase security around the White House perimeter. In 1984, a report entitled "Current White House Problems of Security, Traffic, and Appearance," was issued by architect John Carl Warnecke, the designer of the Lafayette Square project for former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. One of this report's recommendations was tunneling Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House and converting the surface street into a landscaped pedestrian area.

In 1982, East Executive Avenue was permanently closed to vehicular traffic and redesigned as a pedestrian mall. The installation of reinforced concrete security barriers in the front of the White House was completed in 1988, and security barriers were installed along E Street to the south of the White House in 1993.

In 1994, following the September 12 crash of a single-engine private aircraft on the South Lawn of the White House, the Department of the Treasury established the White House Security Review to conduct a thorough and comprehensive investigation into the circumstances leading to the crash.

Shortly after the Review was established, another incident occurred. A man standing on the sidewalk outside the north fence of the White House fired twenty-nine rounds from a semi-automatic assault rifle toward the north facade. In response to this and several other security-related incidents, the scope of the security issues being studied by the White House Security Review was expanded to include an even more comprehensive review of the security of the White House. Indeed, the Review was directed to examine "[t]he dangers posed to the White House Complex and the protectees therein by air or ground assaults" (White House Security Review, Pg. 3). An independent advisory committee consisting of people of national prominence, integrity, and expertise was selected to provide guidance to the review team and to ensure a comprehensive and impartial review.

The White House Security Review was completed in May 1995. The interests of national security, the security of the President and the first family, future Presidents, and the White House Complex demand that most of the information gathered and recommendations presented be strictly safeguarded and classified. The review resulted in 11 major recommendations that would further enhance security. Included was a recommendation to reroute vehicular traffic around the White House Complex and to convert Pennsylvania Avenue to a pedestrian street.

1.3 DESCRIPTION OF SECURITY ACTION

On May 20, 1995, vehicular traffic was restricted on certain portions of streets contiguous to the perimeter

of the White House Complex. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic was not restricted on any of these streets. The action is described in detail below.

1.3.1 Introduction

This description summarizes the current vehicular restrictions on public streets surrounding the White House. These restrictions include certain pre-existing vehicular restrictions, described in Subsection A of Section 1.3.2, on streets (Jackson Place, Alexander Hamilton Place, East Executive Avenue extended) near the White House that were not promulgated by the Secret Service. However, at each of these various pre-existing restrictions, the Secret Service has established or increased security on or after May 20, 1995, in the manner indicated. It also includes a description, presented in Subsection B, of the vehicular restrictions carried out by the Secret Service on or after May 20, 1995. See Figure 1-2 at the end of Chapter 1 for a map of the vehicular restrictions.

Specific vehicular restrictions on these streets constitute several types: (1) streets upon which access is limited to police, fire, ambulance, and motorcade use; (2) streets upon which access is limited to vehicles gaining access to the White House Complex, or vehicles with parking permits; or (3), streets upon which limited public parking is permitted.

1.3.2 Description of Restrictions and Security Action

A. Pre-Existing Restrictions

Years before the security action was taken, a number of roadways contiguous to the White House Complex were closed to public vehicular traffic. The following section summarizes these vehicular traffic restrictions and the security controls in effect prior to the action.

Jackson Place from Pennsylvania Avenue north to H Street - Access was previously limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, and authorized vehicles. Parking and use were restricted to permit holders and authorized vehicles. Concrete security barriers had been installed across a section of the southern end of the roadway at the intersection with Pennsylvania Avenue.

West Executive Avenue from Pennsylvania Avenue south to State Place - This section of West Executive Avenue lies within the secure perimeter of the White House Complex. Access and parking were previously limited to authorized vehicles.

East Executive Avenue from Pennsylvania Avenue south and west to E Street - East Executive Avenue has been closed to through traffic for a number of years. Access was limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, and authorized vehicles. Parking on the roadway was restricted to permit holders and authorized vehicles.

Alexander Hamilton Place from East Executive Avenue east to 15th Street, NW - This roadway was previously closed to through traffic. Access was limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, and authorized vehicles. Parking on the roadway was restricted to permit holders and authorized vehicles.

B. Restrictions and Security Controls Implemented as part of the May 20, 1995 Security Action (For Security Reasons and Traffic Flow Purposes)

Pennsylvania Avenue (1600 Block) from Madison Place west to 17th Street, NW - This section of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House Complex was closed to public vehicular traffic. Access

is now limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, and authorized vehicles (generally police, fire, ambulance, and motorcade). The perimeter of the avenue was secured by concrete barriers and planters, placed along the north side of Lafayette Park between Jackson Place and Madison Place, and across the east and west ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, at 17th Street and at Madison Place.

In addition, Secret Service Uniformed Division vehicles were positioned at the following points of access to the avenue:

- (1) Pennsylvania Avenue at 17th Street.
- (2) Jackson Place at H Street.
- (3) Madison Place at H Street
- (4) Pennsylvania Avenue between Madison Place and 15th Street

These access control points control access to Pennsylvania Avenue by authorized vehicles entering from 17th Street, from H Street (via Jackson Place and Madison Place), and from 15th Street.

Pennsylvania Avenue (1500 Block) from Madison Place east to 15th Street - The western portion of this block of Pennsylvania Avenue was closed to public traffic. Access was limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, and authorized vehicles. The roadway was secured by concrete barriers and planters and a Secret Service Uniformed Division vehicle, positioned approximately 30 yards east of Madison Place. The eastern portion remains open. Public parking was increased in the area and access is permitted to pedestrians, bicycles, and other traffic.

Madison Place from Pennsylvania Avenue north to H Street - Madison Place was closed to public vehicular traffic. Access is limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, and authorized vehicles. The north end of the roadway is secured by concrete barriers and a Secret Service Uniformed Division vehicle.

Alexander Hamilton Place - Alexander Hamilton Place was previously restricted to authorized vehicles. Concrete barriers and a Secret Service Uniformed Division vehicle were positioned on the roadway at 15th Street to control unauthorized vehicle access.

E Street, westbound / South Executive Avenue / State Place - The westbound lanes of E Street, South Executive Avenue and State Place, south of the White House Complex, between 15th Street and 17th Street were restricted to access by authorized vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. E Street westbound was restricted for traffic flow purposes as part of the immediate traffic management response. The eastbound lanes of E Street, from 17th Street east to 15th Street, remain open to through traffic.

Concrete barriers were placed in the following locations:

- The west sidewalk of 15th Street from Alexander Hamilton Place south to E Street;
- The north sidewalk and the adjacent westbound lane of E Street, from 15th Street west to East Executive Avenue. The westbound lanes of E Street are now separated from the eastbound lanes by a combination of a median strip and concrete barriers;
- The north sidewalk of E Street, from South Executive Avenue west to 17th Street; and
- The east sidewalk of 17th Street, from E Street north to State Place.

A number of security access control points were established to control vehicle access to the secured roadways. These access control points are operated by Secret Service Uniformed Division Officers at the following locations:

- E Street at East Executive Avenue - Access control points for vehicles accessing restricted westbound lanes of E Street, East Executive Avenue, and Alexander Hamilton Place;
- South Executive Avenue at E Street - Access control point for vehicles accessing the White House and State Place from both eastbound and westbound E Street; and
- State Place at 17th Street - Access control point for vehicles exiting State Place to 17th Street and New York Avenue.

Parking on State Place, South Executive Avenue, and restricted portions of E Street, is open to authorized vehicles and permit holders.

Figure 1-1: Security action and Immediate Traffic Management Response